

# Look Around Downtown

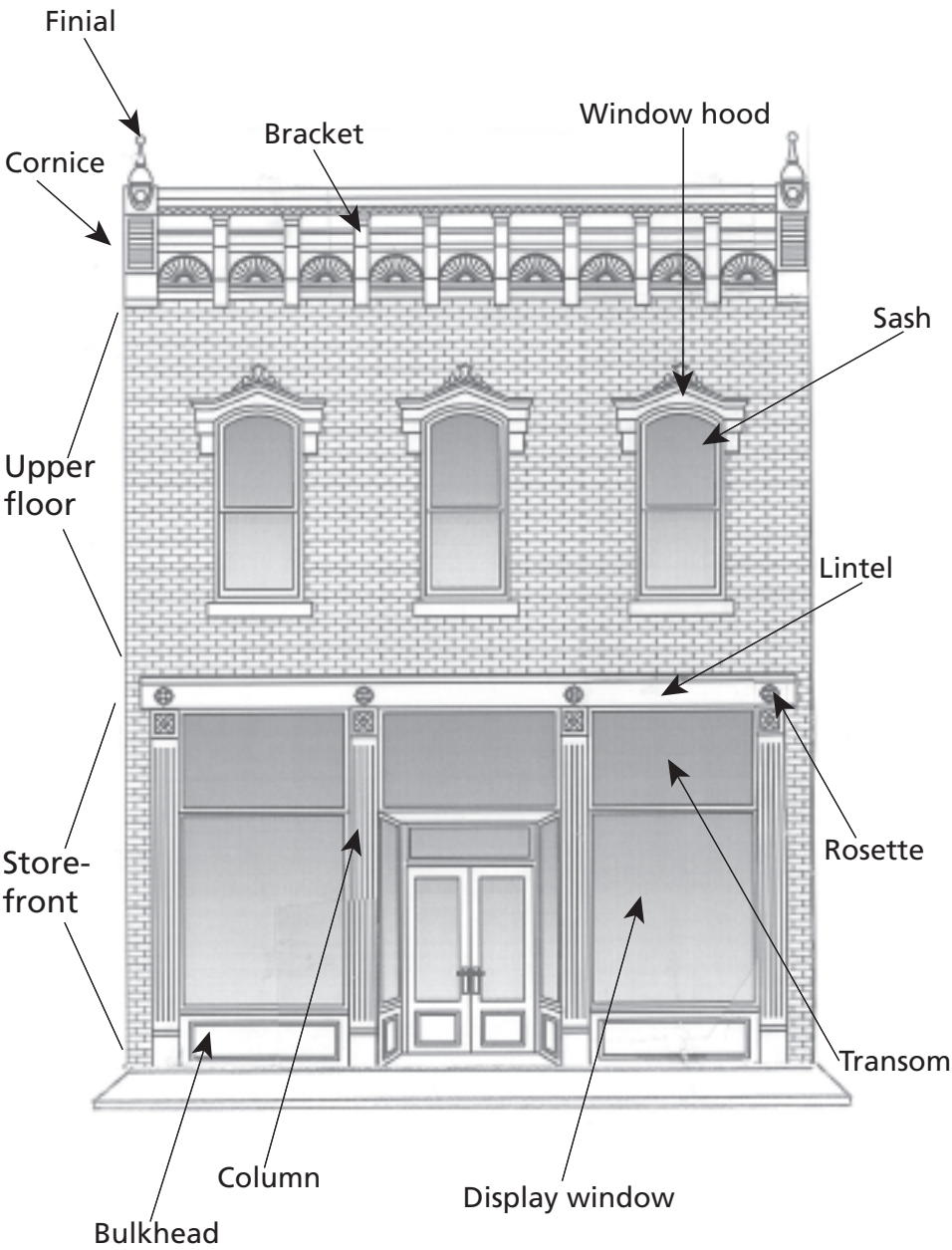


## Fargo Heritage Discovery Walk



Spring 2007

# Anatomy of a Main Street Building



# Introduction

Although many historic buildings have been lost over time to fires, urban renewal, or other circumstances, Fargo is fortunate that so many fine buildings still remain. This brochure is intended to foster appreciation for Fargo's historic buildings, and to offer a glimpse at the history of Fargo.

This brochure consists of three main sections: a northern route walking tour, a southern route walking tour and some additional points of interest near the downtown area that can be reached easily by car. The tours are designed to be walked at a leisurely pace in one hour or less. They follow traffic flow directions so you can drive the routes and park along the way if you wish. The buildings on the walking tours are identified by numbered placards affixed to building windows.

When selecting the buildings for the tour, we tried to include primarily those buildings that contribute to the Downtown Fargo Historic District and that also, because of their location, would lend themselves to a logical route. There are many fine historic buildings in the downtown area, and these tour routes provide a good sampling but are not all inclusive.

Many of the buildings included in this brochure are part of the Downtown Fargo Historic District which was listed in 1983, and for those buildings it will be noted next to the address whether they are contributing to the district. A building is considered to be contributing if it adds to the historic associations or architectural qualities of the historic district. A building with the "pivotal" notation is exceptional, and would be eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Some buildings are already individually listed in the National Register, and that is noted as well.

A recorded narrative will be posted in fall 2007 at [www.cityoffargo.com](http://www.cityoffargo.com).

## History

The City of Fargo was first platted in 1871 and experienced its first building boom in 1878, when 50 new buildings were erected in as many days. Front Street, now known as Main Avenue, became the main thoroughfare. The Northern Pacific Headquarters Hotel, built in 1872 on the north side of the tracks, made lower Broadway a desired business location. The future of Broadway was further enhanced by the location of the



Looking east on Front Street (Main Avenue), 1878  
Credit: NDIRS 20-29-18

St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railroad tracks (later the Great Northern) at Fifth Street North and Broadway in 1882. Only a few commercial buildings from the boom of the 1880s have survived. Most of these are designed in the Gothic or Italianate styles.

Fargo immediately became the point of exchange for the surrounding rural areas, which were quickly filling up with farming settlements. By 1882, the town was a forward-looking city of over 8,000 people.

Disaster struck on June 7, 1893, when 90 percent of the city's center was reduced to ashes by a fire that started on Front Street. Within just a few hours, the fire spread east and north, fueled by strong winds. According to one account, "the fire burned over a space of 160 acres, embracing the most compactly built portion of the city. In fact, the east side of Broadway from the Northern Pacific Railroad to the Great Northern Depot was completely wiped out."



1893 fire, ruins of the Columbia Hotel,  
corner of Roberts Street and 2nd Avenue N.  
Credit: NDIRS 51-03-08

Although the 1893 fire destroyed many fine examples of architecture, the post-fire city became more architecturally substantial. Many of the new buildings were larger and of higher quality than the buildings they replaced. The architecture of Fargo still bears the stamp of the fine architects who rebuilt the city.

# Architecture

Much of the post-fire construction in downtown Fargo was done in Classical Revival style. Of the three major Classical Revival styles, the most popular in Fargo was the Neo-Classical. In its purest form, Neo-Classical buildings were usually faced with cut stone, tended to be built on a large scale and often had enormous columned porticos, blank expanses of wall, and Greek design elements. Most of Fargo's early buildings in this style have Classical Revival details such as engaged brick pilasters that separate window bays, bracketed metal cornices, and raised brick parapets. Windows are often arched; some have pressed metal spandrels and are decorated with keystones. The best known remaining examples of this style include the Powers Hotel, the Gardner Hotel and the Federal Courthouse Building.

Another popular style was Richardsonian Romanesque. This style is weighty and massive, often achieved with large rough-faced stone blocks and contrasting heavy stone trim. The Northern Pacific Depot, the Great Northern Depot, and the Robb-Lawrence Company Warehouse (NDSU Downtown) are good examples of this style.



Looking north on Broadway, circa 1925

# Glossary

**Arcade**—a porch supported by a series of arches or arched columns; also referring to the series of arches themselves

**Balustrade**—a decorative railing supported by short posts or pillars called balusters

**Bay**—a visually defined unit of space on an exterior wall; a vertical wall division

**Belt (Running) Course**—a decorative band in wood, stone or brick, on the outside of a wall used to demarcate interior floors

**Bracket**—a brace projecting from a wall to support a cornice or molding

**Butter joint**—a very smooth brick mortar the consistency of whipped butter

**Cartouche**—an ornamental tablet often inscribed or decorated with elaborate scroll-like carving

**Corbel**—a series of projections, each stepped farther forward, as in courses of brick at a cornice or frieze

**Cornice**—in classical architecture, the upper projecting section of molding at the top of a wall

**Dentil**—a series of small square blocks used as ornamentation on classical architecture

**Egg and dart**—a band of egg-shaped design alternating with a dart-like design

# Glossary

**Facade**—the face of front of a building

**Keystone**—in masonry building, the central wedge-shaped stone at the top of an arch

**Lintel**—the horizontal beam along the top of a window or door

**Parapet**—a section of wall which rises above the roof of a building, especially a commercial building

**Pediment**—the top triangular section of a classical order which looks like a gabled roof

**Quoins**—units of stone or brick used to accentuate the corners of a building

**Spandrel panel**—a wall panel which fills the space between the top of the window in one story and the bottom of the window on the next higher story





# Northern Tour Route



The map shows a city block with streets labeled 1ST, 2ND, 3RD, 4TH, 5TH, 6TH, 7TH, and 8TH running horizontally. A vertical street labeled ROBERTS runs through the center. A dashed line with arrows indicates a route starting from the bottom left, going east on 1ST, then north on ROBERTS, and finally east on 6TH. Buildings are represented by numbered grey shapes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30. The route passes by buildings 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28.

## **Stop 1: Great Northern Depot— 425 Broadway (Contributing)**

Samuel Bartlett, a friend of Empire Builder James J. Hill, designed a string of depots, including this one, along the Great Northern Railway through North Dakota to Glacier Park, Montana.

The depot was designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, in dark red brick with a rusticated sandstone foundation and tile roof.

The American Railway Express Building to the east of the depot was built to match the depot. James J. Hill's 36,000-square-foot home in St. Paul is also a Richardsonian Romanesque building. The depot was constructed in 1906.



## **Stop 2: Viking Hotel— 413 Broadway (Contributing)**

Constructed of cream brick with a butter joint, this building has rough stone sills, a belt course, and an elaborate bracketed metal cornice.

The parapet has the name block. Since 1940, the hotel has been variously known as the Northern and the Bison.



## **Stop 3: Derecci Block— 311 Broadway (Contributing)**

This 1913 building is of red Hebron brick with a butter joint, giving the façade a smooth appearance. It is decorated with a molded metal cornice and stone trim.

The lobby is in beautiful Art Deco style, with murals and black marble trim, well-worth seeing. Although smaller and plainer, the style is reminiscent of the Powers Hotel, and Derecci was related to the Powers family.



## **Stop 4: Sons of Norway Lodge— 309 Broadway (Contributing)**

This is a Classical Revival building with three recessed bays, egg and dart stone trim above the third story, stone sills and sill courses, and an elaborate brick parapet with a center cartouche (French Renaissance motif) in carved stone.



The Sons of Norway fraternal organization was founded in Minneapolis in 1895 by a group of 18 immigrants who wanted to preserve their Norwegian heritage. The movement spread quickly in Minnesota and North Dakota and, in 1905, this lodge was erected in Fargo.

## **Stop 5: Dixon Block— 305 Broadway (Contributing)**

One of the most handsome at the north end of Broadway, this building has a Classical Revival facade, faced with cream-colored brick with a butter joint. The central bay has three brick-arched windows and a dentilled metal cornice. Built in 1905, it was designed by the Hancock Brothers. Prior to 1928, it housed the Dixon Hotel and Laundry.



## **Stop 6: Commercial Building— 301 Broadway/515 3rd Avenue N. (Contributing)**

This two-story, yellow brick building has stone sills and coping atop a low parapet, and a simple brick cornice. Built in 1900, the bricks are laid in Flemish bond.



## Stop 7: American Legion Club— 505 3rd Avenue N.

Built in 1949, this building is a good example of the post-war modern style of architecture. It is characterized by abstract styles and simplified geometric forms. The American Legion has owned and occupied the building since it was built.



## Stop 8: Merchants National Bank Building—122 Broadway (Pivotal)

This 1921 Commercial Colonial Revival brick building is decorated with cream-colored glazed tile trim, a name and date block, and Jacobean tabs around the windows.

The Hancock Brothers, who built this building, dominated post-fire construction in Fargo.

Their other notable buildings are the Graver Hotel and the Hancock building, but they built many more. The firm offers a good example of how Fargo profited from its disaster. Rebuilding after the fire provided a livelihood for many Fargoans, including architects George and Walter Hancock.



## Stop 9: Black Building— 114 Broadway (Pivotal)

This is the tallest downtown building in the Historic District and is an outstanding example of the Art Moderne style.

Faced with Indiana limestone, the Black Building has dark metal window spandrel panels between the windows forming recessed vertical bays. The Art Moderne interior lobby and elevator doors are worth seeing. The building was designed by the Minneapolis firm of Lang, Raugland, and Lewis, with Braseth and Houkom of Fargo as consulting architects. It was built in 1930.



George Black, son of an Irish immigrant, came to Fargo in 1912 to investigate the possibility of opening a dry goods store. Finding the city thriving, he and his father founded a store; Black stayed to run it, and the business grew. He had various attractions in the store, including sales where every garment buyer received a free dish of ice cream. The store also released live turkeys from its roof before Thanksgiving—an event that tied up traffic in the whole town.

In 1929, after the stock market crash, Black decided to build a new building for his store—the Black Building—and sell the business to Sears. Sears occupied the basement and first two floors, with George acting as manager. The remaining six floors were office space for tenants such as WDAY and numerous doctors, lawyers and dentists.

## **Stop 10: Hancock Building— 109 Broadway (Contributing)**

This 1903 building and the adjacent Douglas Block at 113 Broadway were built in the Classical Revival style. The Hancock Building has particularly beautiful stamped metal spandrel panels and a bracketed metal cornice. The exaggerated keystones above the window are typical of the period.



## **Stop 11: International Order of Odd Fellows Hall— 521 1st Avenue N. (Contributing)**

This is one of the earliest post-fire buildings, dating from 1894, with a third story added in 1915-16. The hall, originally located on the second floor, provided early Fargo with much-needed meeting space. It also served as temporary office space for many of the regional architects who relocated to Fargo during the post-fire building boom. The style is Renaissance Revival with a Palladian motif over the 1st Avenue entrance, flanked by freestanding Corinthian columns. The laying of the cornerstone was accompanied by a parade and many speeches.





## **Stop 12: Stone Building— 613 1st Avenue N. (Contributing)**

Built in 1910 in Classical Revival style with yellow brick and a butter joint, this building is decorated with stone trim and has pilasters between the bays with egg and dart molding. The foliated frieze and the elaborately dentilled cornice with paired brackets are metal.



This grand structure was the third home of the Charles R. Stone Piano Company. Stone brought music to residents all over the Red River Valley and organized classes in stringed instruments and piano in small towns throughout North Dakota, Minnesota, eastern Montana and Idaho. In the days before mass entertainment, people made their own amusement. Many more played musical instruments than today. Stone's Music store helped to make Fargo a major retailing center.

## **Stop 13: Pioneer Life Insurance Building—625 1st Avenue N. (Contributing)**

This 1910 four story, dark yellow brick building is decorated with stone trim. It has square corner towers that form a parapet above the cornice.



## **Stop 14: Porterfield Block— 109–111 Roberts Street (Contributing)**

This block was designed by the Hancock Brothers and built by Stewart Wilson in 1917. It is a Jacobean commercial-style building, constructed for the wholesale drug company of Fout and Porterfield. The stone “tabs” on the end windows are typical Jacobean design elements, loosely part of the Colonial Revival style after the turn of the 20th century. Fout and Porterfield was a well-established Fargo company, and both men possessed degrees in pharmacy—not required for druggists in the late 19th century, but becoming increasingly desirable.



## **Stop 15: Grand Lodge of the AOUW— 112 Roberts Street (National Register)**

This building was designed by the architectural firm of Haxby & Gillespie and built in 1915. Originally built for the Grand Lodge of the Ancient Order of United Workmen, it is now known as Federal Square. It is a Classical Revival, three-story, brick ornamented building, with Palladian windows and engaged Tuscan pilasters. It was individually listed in the National Register in 1979.



## Stop 16: First Presbyterian Church—650 2nd Avenue N.

This impressive church was built in 1929 in the Scottish Gothic Revival style. The church was designed by Minneapolis-based Lang, Rauland and Lewis Architects and Engineers, with Fargo's William F. Kurke serving as associate architect. The church features buttresses, pointed-



arch windows with tracery, and lofty interior spaces, which are hallmarks of Gothic architecture. The exterior is constructed of Faribault (Minnesota) limestone, laid in an ashlar pattern. Window openings are framed with dressed limestone, including the tracery of the larger stained glass sanctuary windows. The church was constructed when First Presbyterian's existing structure was purchased by the federal government to allow for expansion of the post office. A "Committee of Fifty" was charged with overseeing the design, construction and furnishing of the new church. The first service was held in the new facility in 1930. It was said at the time that "Practical building and religion unite in simple, dignified lines."

## **Stop 17: Graver Hotel— 113 Roberts Street (Contributing)**

This building was designed by William F. Kurke and built by T. F. Powers in 1918. Built as apartments and originally known as the Equity Building, this five-story building has red wire-faced brick decorated with cream-colored terracotta tiles.



## **Stop 18: Commercial Building—202 Broadway (Contributing)**

Originally built by T. F. Powers in 1908, this building was refaced in 1940 to its present appearance by Braseth and Houkom for Edwin A. Clapp. It is one of the few Art Moderne buildings today in the historic district.



## **Stop 19: McKone Building— 206 Broadway (Contributing)**

This building was designed by Andrew J. O'Shea in the Classical Commercial style, with Ionic capitals on the corner pilasters and three-part windows. It was built in 1905.



## **Stop 20: Loretta Block— 208–212 Broadway (Contributing)**

The Loretta Block was planned by Peter Elliott, and was named after his youngest daughter. Elliott was a businessman of note who owned several downtown hotels and was also an early Fargo mayor. The building was originally purchased by J.B. Bergstrom and George R. Crowe when their



furniture store ran out of space. They moved into the building in 1909 and built an extension in 1916. The north one-third of the Loretta Block, which is now covered over at the storefront level, was built in 1912. These Classical Commercial style buildings were built in two stages because of business entanglements.

## **Stop 21: Johnsons Block— 216 Broadway (Contributing)**

Designed by Jacob Friedlander for the Johnson Brothers, this building housed the Johnson bicycle shop, as well as apartments, for many years. Made of brick, it is decorated with an elaborate corbelled brick cornice and was built in 1900. Johnson Brothers claimed to have the only complete repair shop in the northwest. The business started in Moorhead in 1887, relocating to Fargo two years later. Bicycles were very popular in the 1890s, both as quick, convenient transportation and as a form of exercise. Another Fargo bicycle dealer, George D. Brown, kept several hundred bicycles in stock along with the new invention, the horseless carriage.



## **Stop 22: Commercial Building—220 Broadway (Contributing)**

This elegant 1903 building has two arched bays with paired windows set in the recess. Stamped metal spandrel panels are inset in the arches over the third-story windows.



## Stop 23: Fargo Theatre— 314 Broadway (National Register)

The architects for this theatre were Liebenburg & Kaplan and Buechner & Orth. The best of its era in downtown Fargo, this 1926 red brick theatre was listed in the National Register in 1982.



Its front facade is decorated with floral stone trim, stone gargoyles, palmettes, and egg and dart trim. The second-story windows form an arcade on the front facade. The marquee is original; the Art Moderne interior is well worth a visit.

The theatre had a Wurlitzer organ built especially for it in New York. The organ has been restored and can be heard before shows on the weekends.

Initially, the theatre hosted vaudeville performances, with performances from among others, Babe Ruth and Tom Mix and his horse, Tony.

In 1937, the theatre interior was completely renovated in an Art Moderne style.

## **Stop 24: Powers Hotel— 400 Broadway (Contributing)**

This is a handsome Classical Revival style building whose first three floors were built in 1914-15. The owner and builder was the Powers Construction Company, one of Fargo's largest volume builders and contractors. Business boomed around the First World War and by 1919, the top two floors were added. The alteration included removing the original parapet and inserting the name block between the third and fourth floors where it now sits.



In 1927, the Powers Hotel purchased the champion steer from the state fair, then held in Fargo, and exhibited it in the lobby.

## **Stop 25: Lowman Block— 406-410 Broadway (Contributing)**

Designed by the architectural firm of Haxby and Gillespie and constructed in 1914, this building has a decorative stone parapet, stone coping, stone sills and a name block. Powers Construction Company was the contractor for this building, which bears some similarity to the Powers Hotel next door.





## Stop 26: Commercial Building— 420 Broadway

Built in 1929, this two-story, four-bay, multi-colored brick building features a cornice of decorative brick inset with concrete diamond-shaped blocks. This building was the home of Leeby's Food Market and Delicatessen until 1990. It is now an upscale variety store with a period lunch counter.



## Stop 27: Aggie Block— 520 Broadway (Contributing)

This two-story, red brick, 1926 building has stone trim and a central arched entrance with a keystone, stone coping on the parapet, and a name block. It was named for real estate investor Samuel Aggie.



## Stop 28: St. Mary's Cathedral—604 Broadway (National Register)

The church was designed by Bassford & Company of Minneapolis in a Gothic Revival style. It was built by a company from Duluth, and the Hancock Brothers, a local architectural firm, supervised construction.



The first Catholic bishop of North Dakota, John Shanley, purchased the land for the cathedral and building started in 1891. Construction was halted by the Fargo fire, and the building was finally completed in 1899. It was the only Catholic church in Fargo until 1917.

The three stained glass windows are focal points in the building, which has numerous windows to maximize the natural light, a key element in Gothic architecture.

Two fresco paintings were recently uncovered after being hidden for over 50 years by acoustic tiles.



## Stop 29: First Lutheran Church— 619 Broadway

This church is early English Gothic Revival style and was built in 1919 by the firm of Magney and Tussler of Minneapolis. The building has a fine pipe organ, installed in 1927, and cathedral chimes.



The congregation of this church dates back to 1871.

The early congregation members were predominately Norwegian immigrants who moved from Goodhue and Rice Counties, Minnesota, to the Red River Valley in the early days of Fargo.

The laying of the cornerstone was done by Reverend I. D. Ylvisaker, president of the Norwegian Church of America.



## Stop 30: Ford Assembly Plant— 505 Broadway (Pivotal)

This handsome 1914 building is faced with red brick and light cream glazed tiles, with a polished granite water table in the Chicago School style. Its walls are punctuated with large expanses of broadly-arched windows. Located along the Great Northern tracks, the plant had a spur line running inside the building. Cars were assembled, then taken to the roof by elevator and washed. Returned to ground level, they were loaded on rail cars, still inside the building. The structure was built by John Graham of Seattle who built similarly designed plants for Ford in other cities, including Minneapolis.



Circa 1920



# Southern Tour Route



[illegible]

# Stop 1: Civil War Soldier Statue— Island Park

This statue of a Union soldier, almost hidden in a small grove of spruce trees, stands guard at the entrance to Island Park.

It was dedicated on Decoration Day, forerunner to our present-day Memorial Day holiday, in 1916.



Governor Louis B. Hanna and the Grand Army of the Republic (a Civil War veterans group) raised the necessary funds to commission the monument. The inscription at the base of the statue reads: “To the Dead a Tribute, To the Living a Memory, To Posterity an Inspiration.”



Civil War Monument, circa 1920s  
Credit: NDIRS-96-11

## Stop 2: Island Park Pool— Island Park

Originally built as the Winter Sports Arena in 1938, the 200' x 300' building was difficult to maintain and was dubbed a



“white elephant.” It was dismantled in 1943 and relocated to Hector Airport to be used as a hangar, but the front facade, with its ribbon windows and curved corners, was left in place. A second arena was built in its place and incorporated the facade from the original arena. When the second arena was demolished in the 1970s, the two-story concrete facade survived again. The facade now serves as the north face of the Island Park Pool with the words “Fargo Arena” inscribed above the entrance.

During the Great Depression, the federal government created various agencies that hired the unemployed to construct public buildings. This increased the nation’s infrastructure and gave people much-needed employment. These agencies, such as the Works Progress Administration, built a number of structures in Fargo, of which the Fargo Arena facade is one of the few still standing.



## **Stop 3: Webster and Cole Building— 21 8th Street S.**

**(National Register)**

This two-story red brick building was built in 1900. Note the elaborate corbelled brick cornice and shallow brick piers separating the window bays.



## **Stop 4: McHench Block— 17–19 8th Street S. (National Register)**

This building has a corbelled cornice and high-arched windows, a hallmark of the Hancock brothers firm.

It was built in 1902 at a cost of \$9,200.

This building was named for Andrew McHench, a surveyor who served on Fargo's first school board.



## **Stop 5: Floyd Block— 15 8th Street S. (National Register)**

This brown brick building, built in 1910, has a corbelled cornice with dentils. The front displays a plain brick parapet with stone coping and metal name block “Floyd.”



## **Stop 6: F. O. Knerr Block— 13 8th Street S. (National Register)**

Before 1900, there were few dairies in the Valley. With only ice available for refrigeration, milk spoiled easily, and most farmers stuck to the more lucrative crop of wheat. With the advent of modern refrigeration and higher dairy prices with World War I, more local dairies emerged.



This two-story brick building with stone lintels, corbelled cornice, and arched parapet was constructed in 1912 as the Knerr Creamery. In 1921, Frank O. Knerr moved his dairy from this location to a larger building at 824 Main Avenue.

## **Stop 7: Masonic Block— 9 8th Street S. (National Register)**

This building was erected by Andrew McHench in 1884 to house the Masonic Shiloh Lodge No. 8 with stores on the first floor. The building was associated with F. L. Watkins and his Dakota Business College from 1891 until 1978.



It is an outstanding example of High Victorian Gothic commercial architecture, designed by architect Charles N. Daniels; note the elaborate cornice and parapet topped with finials. This building was listed in the National Register in 1979.

## **Stop 8: Watkins Block— 806 Main Avenue (Contributing)**

F. L. Watkins built this north wing in 1906 as his Dakota Business College grew. It has a distinctive Classical Revival facade with arched keystone windows, a wide Chicago style three-part window on the second floor framed by Ionic capital pilasters, and white marble string courses.



## **Stop 9: Burlington Northern Headquarters—801 Main Avenue**

**(Contributing)**

This 1925 building was constructed in the Colonial Revival style, with a gabled roof and parapet projecting over the roof line. The architectural decoration on the headquarters is limited to cream brick trim at the lintels, sills, and water table.



## **Stop 10: Shields Block— 714 Main Avenue**

**(Contributing)**

The Shields Block, circa 1905-1910, features stamped metal spandrel panels under the windows between each floor. David W. Shields, a shoemaker and investor, was the son-in-law of Peter Luger, owner of the next-door store building. The Shields Block is virtually identical to the building at 220 Broadway.



## Stop 11: The Luger Furniture Store—716 Main Avenue

(Contributing)

The 1882 Luger Furniture Store is one of the best remaining High Victorian Gothic commercial examples in Fargo. The building has high vertical massing, with a very elaborate tall cornice and parapet in corbelled brick. Its center bay has a recessed Gothic arch inset with window.



Looking east on Front Street (Main Avenue), 1879; the Luger Building is on the left edge of the photo.  
Credit: NDIRS 2042-4-9

## Stop 12: Northern Pacific Railroad Depot— 701 Main Avenue (National Register)

Cass Gilbert, who was also the architect for the Minnesota State Capitol, designed this Richardsonian Romanesque style depot in 1898, and it was completed in 1900.



The walls are dark-colored St. Louis pressed brick with Lake Superior brownstone trim and a red tile roof. Note the arched windows and deeply overhung hipped roof with bracketed supports. The depot was listed in the National Register in 1975.

The Northern Pacific was the first railway to go through Fargo, and the only one whose main route went through the town. The Great Northern Railroad track was a spur of the main line.

The railroad passed through the town in 1872, before its financial collapse caused the Panic of 1873. When the railroad reorganized and began rebuilding in 1879, Fargo started to prosper.

Fargo remained pivotal to the Northern Pacific when it reached the West Coast in 1883. Fargo became a divisional headquarters for the railroad, a position that spurred much construction, notably the famous Headquarters Hotel, which survived the fire of 1893, only to be destroyed by another fire in 1899.

## Stop 13: deLendrecie's Building— 620 Main Avenue (National Register)

This elegant five-story, grey, pressed brick and brownstone structure was built by the St. Louis Pressed Brick Co. It features red mortar butter joints and red sandstone trim from Portage Entre, Michigan, and is topped with classically inspired pressed metal cornice and brick and sandstone parapet.



The building is closely associated with Eugene and Onesine deLendrecie, pioneer merchants and founders of one of North Dakota's premier department stores. It was listed in the National Register in 1979.

The first two floors were designed by McMillan and Tenbusch and built in 1894. The top three floors were designed by Fargo architect Andrew O'Shea and added in 1904.

The deLendrecie's Department Store relocated to West Acres Shopping Center in 1972, leaving the building vacant. Three years later, after an interior renovation that created apartments and small retail spaces, the building reopened as "Block Six of the Original Townsite."

## Stop 14: 600 Block, Main Avenue (Contributing)



These buildings represent Fargo's greatest concentration of Italianate commercial structures. The region experienced a period of rapid growth known as the Great Dakota Boom, which began with the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Most of these buildings were constructed when Fargo was still part of Dakota Territory; North Dakota became a state on November 2, 1889.

These buildings reflect the architecture in downtown Fargo during that time, before 90 percent of it was destroyed in the Fargo fire.

Key architectural features in this style are paired bracketed cornices, arched windows, hood molds and drip molds. Few examples of this style are extant in the state.



## Stop 15: Herbst Building— 16 Broadway

Isaac Herbst's original store was destroyed in the Fargo fire. He rebuilt at 16 Broadway. This building was also damaged by fire in 1894, but the structure survived, and Herbst's business grew into a thriving department store.



When Isaac died in 1910, his wife, Emma, took over as president of the store, an unusual role for a woman at that time. She stepped down when her son took over in 1918, but remained as vice president until her death in 1925.

In the early 1970s, Herbst established branch stores throughout North Dakota, in Bismarck, Devils Lake, Jamestown and even at the new West Acres Shopping Center in Fargo.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the store gave all city children a present on their 12th birthday. Fargo citizen Jim Landblom recollected that he received a Brownie camera from Herbst for his birthday in 1930.

## Stop 16: First National Bank Building—15 Broadway

This bank was built in 1926 in the emerging Art Deco or Moderne style. The strong vertical thrust of the projecting piers, combined with the absence of a traditional cornice, lends the 6-story building an aura of soaring height. Though the street-level facade and the windows have been altered, the original masonry piers and relief decoration remain.



The carved stone marquee over the front entrance (now covered) proclaimed it “The oldest bank in North Dakota.” Louis B. Hanna founded the First National Bank in 1878. He went on to serve in Congress and as governor of the state.

First National Bank was previously located at 602 Main Avenue.



This is an earlier First National Bank building. Built in 1895, it still stands at 602 Main Ave (currently Wimmers Jewelry) but has been completely refaced.

Credit: NDIRS 20-29-810

## Stop 17: Fargo National Bank Building—52 Broadway (Contributing)

This structure was built in the Classical Revival style in 1911 with cream brick and butter joint. Note the pedimented and bracketed stone entry flanked by Greek Ionic columns on engaged piers.



The Fargo National Bank was one of the oldest banking houses in the state. It was organized in 1897. Martin Hector, who moved to Fargo in 1872, was elected as the bank's first president and O. J. deLendrecie as its first vice president.

Hector served as president of the bank for 41 years. He had previously been engaged in city politics, serving some time as mayor. Fargo's international airport is named after Hector.

## **Stop 18: Gate City Block— 73 Broadway (Contributing)**

This is one of the earliest buildings on Broadway, dating from the first generation of post-fire construction in 1894. It was originally built as the O'Neill Block, but in 1923 became Gate City Building and Loan, which was founded by the architect W.D. Gillespie after he left the architectural partnership of Haxby and Gillespie.

In 1940, the building was totally refaced for Gate City in Art Moderne style by architects Braseth and Houkom.



## **Stop 19: Commercial Building— 520 1st Avenue N.**

This elegant 1907, two-story brick building has four bays and an elaborately corbelled brick cornice. It also features stone lintels and parapet coping.



## Stop 20: Syndicate Block— 64–74 Broadway

Built in 1893 by a syndicate of businessmen, this building was one of the very first post-fire buildings and housed the Elliott Hotel.



The building originally had an ornate cornice and parapet, with corner hexagonal towers on the north and south corners. The building was heavily damaged in a 1941 fire that gutted the interior, and many of the fine exterior features were also damaged and removed.

The original Elliott Hotel, built by Peter Elliott, was burned in the Fargo fire of 1893. After that, Elliott erected a large tent as a temporary restaurant for the town until this building was completed. It featured all the most modern conveniences of the time, including steam heat and electric lighting.

Elliott had come to Fargo as a carpenter in 1873, but abandoned that profession to work on the steamboats that traveled between Fargo and Winnipeg.

The building is currently (2006) undergoing a storefront rehabilitation project in an attempt to restore some of its historical integrity.

## Stop 21: Elliott Hotel Annex— 606 1st Ave N (Contributing)

This building was designed in the Classical Revival style; although it is now painted, it was originally cream brick with red sandstone trim. It was built in 1899 as an annex for the Elliott Hotel around the corner at 64-74 Broadway.



Elliott Hotel Building (annex on the right side)  
Credit: NDIRS 50-7-1

## Stop 22: Gardner Hotel— 16 Roberts Street (Pivotal)

This hotel was designed by the Hancock brothers and built in 1908. This is the most elaborate Classical Revival structure in downtown Fargo.



Note the paired bracketed metal cornice and foliated metal frieze, the brick quoins at the corners of the walls, the stone balustrade over the Roberts Street entrance, the egg and dart trim at the tops of the corner piers above the first story, and the stylized Corinthian capitols at the tops of the pilasters.

The hotel was completely financed, planned, built and furnished by Fargoans, and its original cost was \$150,000. It catered to “drummers,” salesmen who traveled throughout the nation in the early 20th century selling their products. The building had steam heat, a public dining room, a barbershop, and a billiard room.

Its illustrious guests included politicians Franklin Delano Roosevelt, William Jennings Bryan, and Robert LaFollette; entertainers Charlie Chaplin, Sophie Tucker, Will Rogers and Jack Dempsey; and businessman James J. Hill.

## **Stop 23: Federal Courthouse Building—655 1st Avenue N. (Contributing)**

This Neo-Classical 1929 building is constructed of dressed stone, with a two-story arcade of fluted Ionic columns between the second- and third- story windows. Note the plain stone frieze, cornice and balustraded parapet.



Built for \$600,000, it served as both post office and courthouse. (The first federal judge after North Dakota achieved statehood in 1886 was Alfred Delavan Thomas, who served for seven years until he died in 1893.)

The first settlers in Fargo had to go to Moorhead for their mail. When early Fargo residents eventually received their own post office, it was established in a grocery store. The post office was housed at the courthouse building from 1929 until 1969, when a new post office was constructed at 657 2nd Ave. N.

The large courthouse addition (Quentin Burdick Federal Courthouse) to the west of the building was constructed in 1996. It more than doubled the size of the original building and allowed the federal functions it houses to remain in the downtown area.



## Stop 24: International Harvester Building—704 1st Avenue N.

The three-story International Harvester Building was constructed in 1904, in the utilitarian style of the day. It is characterized by masonry exterior bearing walls and large window openings to provide daylight deep into the structure. The interior structure consists of heavy timber, capable of supporting the large machinery that was housed on each floor. A freight elevator provided access to all floors.



Cyrus McCormick, inventor of the reaper, founded the International Harvester Company in Chicago in the early 1850s.

With the bonanza farms of the Red River Valley producing huge quantities of wheat for the Minneapolis market, the International Harvester Company decided to establish a branch in Fargo. Their first building in 1879 was two stories high, including office space and three warehouses. Located near the Northern Pacific tracks, the branch was able to supply mowers, reapers, corn harvesters, rakes, corn huskers and corn shredders to North Dakota and western Minnesota.

This 1904 building was renovated in 1996 to house the Plains Art Museum, which maintains the premier collection of regional art, as well as hosting touring exhibits.

## **Stop 25: Union Storage and Transfer Company Building— 806 NP Avenue (Contributing)**

The walls of this warehouse are red wire-faced brick. The entrance is decorated with white, green, red and black terracotta tiles in a geometric design. Each window bay is separated by brick piers.



## **Stop 26: Swift & Company Building— 10 8 St N. (Contributing)**

This 1913 building and several others on NP Avenue were large jobbing and meatpacking houses raised along the NP tracks in response to favorable rates in Fargo in the 1910s and later.

The two-story building features a raised basement, red brick, stone sills and coping on its parapet.



## Stop 27: Robb Lawrence Building— 650 NP Avenue (Pivotal)

Built in 1903, this four-story, red brick building with red sandstone trim was designed by architect William C. Albrant in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Note the stamped metal fan-shaped motif in arches on third-story windows.



The building is a testament to Fargo's premier position as a regional distribution center for agricultural implements at the beginning of the 20th century. Originally used as a farm implement warehouse, it features massive post and beam construction on the top three floors to accommodate the large farm machinery it housed.

Vacant for much of the 1990s, the building was literally just hours away from the wrecking ball when it was purchased by software developer Doug Burgum and given to North Dakota State University for the Art, Architecture and Landscape Architecture programs. After a \$10 million rehabilitation, it reopened in 2004 as North Dakota State University's downtown campus.



# Additional Points of Interest

# Stop 1: Minneapolis Moline Building—218 NP Avenue

Built in 1919, this three-story commercial building was constructed with a structural steel and heavy wood timber frame.

The building was originally built for the Minneapolis Steel & Manufacturing Company for use by its tractor division.

This company, after a 1929 merger, became the Minneapolis Moline Power Equipment Company, and the building served as its tractor distribution center until 1962.

In 2003, after an extensive renovation, it reopened as the home of the Vogel Law Firm.



Minneapolis Moline tractors, circa 1930s  
Credit: NDIRS 2023-30-1

## Stop 2: Advance–Rumely Thresher Co.—300 NP Avenue

The original two-story brown brick building, with cast stone cap, pillar caps and water table, was built in 1920. Cast stone accentuates the original entry on the north with “Advance Rumely Thresher Co.” etched above.



An extensive renovation occurred in 2001 that relocated the main entrance from the north side to the east, added a metal-clad third story as luxury condominiums, and placed a one-story brick addition on the south side. The interior was also completely renovated, with the original mushroom columns fully exposed.



NP Avenue looking west from 2nd Street, circa 1922  
Credit: NDIRS 2065-32-2

## **Stop 3: Pence Automobile Co. Warehouse—301 NP Avenue (National Register)**

This three-story building is of cream-colored brick with elaborate, glazed terra cotta trim. Designed in 1918 by the Minneapolis firm of Long, Lamoreaux, and Long, the building is in Classical Revival style and was completed in 1920.



Its original use was as “the best automobile sales and service building in the Northwest.” There was a large elevator at the northeast corner of the building that allowed vehicles to be sent up to the second or third story.



**Pence Automobile Co., 1935  
Credit: NDIRS FH 386-1**

## Stop 4: J. I. Case building— 1 2nd St N.

This three-story yellow brick building was built in the American Commercial style of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This building was designed by architect Milton Beebe and completed in 1908.



Its dominant exterior feature is its corbelled masonry cornice.

An entrance pavilion was added onto the north side of the building in 1984 when it was remodeled into an office building. At this same time, aluminum windows replaced the old wood windows. “Old Abe,” a 17-foot high bronze eagle, was perched atop the south end of the building until the mid 1960s when it was moved to Bonanzaville.

Inventor Jerome Increase Case founded Case in Racine, Wisconsin, in 1842 to build threshing machines. Later, the company gained global recognition as the first builder of steam engines for agricultural use, eventually becoming the world's largest maker of steam engines.



## Stop 5: Monticello-Mount Vernon-Arlington Apartments— 711 to 719 Broadway

(National Register)

The building's three main entrances bear the names of Monticello, Mount Vernon and Arlington. This apartment building was designed in the Classical Revival style by architect Andrew O'Shea. Built in 1910, it was listed in the National Register in 1987.



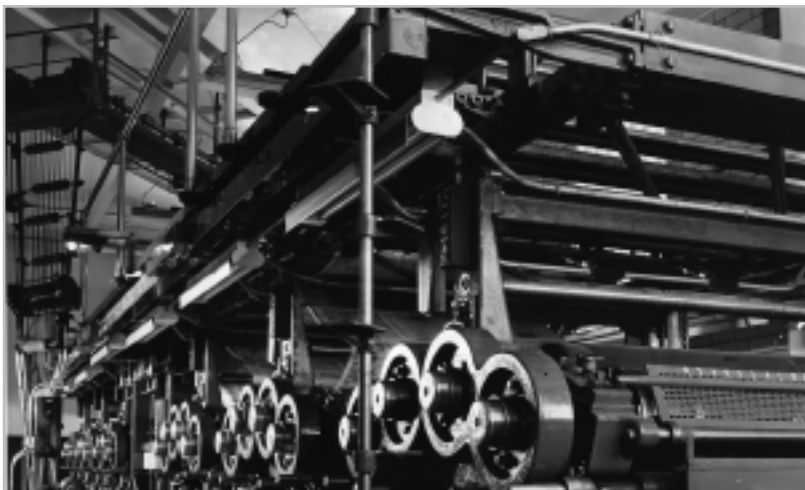
The three-story brick structure was designed with each entrance leading to six apartments, and each apartment having a porch. These porches, facing Broadway, are built with two-story columns on a brick base. Third story columns were added, and the porches were screened in at a later date.

## Stop 6: Forum Building— 101 5th St N

This is a five-story, cream-colored brick building with little exterior adornment. Originally built as a three-story structure in 1926, it was described as “typical of the State of North Dakota with the rugged strength and beauty of the plains.” The interior public space, however, was elegantly decorated and furnished. The top two stories were added in 1938.



The Fargo Forum was founded by Major Alanson Edwards and Colonel H.C. Plumley in 1891. Edwards had been involved in earlier area newspapers, such as the Republican and the Daily Argus, dating back to the 1870s.



Forum printing presses, 1953  
Credit: NDIRS Folio 71-12-6

## Stop 7: Cass County Courthouse—211 9th St S (National Register)

Designed by Charles E. Bell, and built in 1904–1906, the courthouse is Fargo’s premier example of Renaissance Revival style architecture. Faced with sandstone, the walls are smooth with a rusticated stone foundation. Stone belt courses delineate the foundation and each story. Window treatment varies, as is common with Renaissance Revival buildings.



The third-floor windows are decorated with detached arches above the lintels, while basement windows terminate in round-headed arches.

The principal design elements focus on the east facade. The front doors are surrounded by a slightly projecting entrance, which terminates in a fully-pedimented gable roof. At the first floor, the doors are recessed in a semi-circular arch which, along with the sill course, forms a Palladian motif and is flanked by a pair of free-standing polished granite Roman Ionic columns. The Palladian motif is echoed at the second floor with Corinthian columns, with two sets of fluted pilasters supporting the stone bracketed frieze, and a rounded keystone arch over the central window. A stone balustrade accents the recessed window. At the apex of the roof is a two-story clock tower in French Second Empire style topped with a cupola. Clock faces on the tower point in all four directions. The tower is decorated with free-standing and engaged fluted columns and pilasters and features a domed roof.

## Stop 8: Fargo Firehouse No. Two — 914 – 916 Main Avenue (Contributing)

Currently used as a private residence, this is the oldest Fargo firehouse still in existence. The earlier downtown firehouse burned in the 1893 fire.

The two-story brick structure was built in 1900 in the Renaissance Revival style.

It features stone keystones, window lintels, piers, and rusticated stone used at the ground floor.



The walls are decorated with brick corner quoins, a brick-paneled frieze under a molded stone cornice, and circular windows surrounded with brick molding and stone keystones.



Firemen with horse-drawn hose wagons

## Stop 9: Statue of Rollo— 9th St & 3rd Ave S

The Rollo Statue commemorates Gange Rolf, founder of Rouen, France, and the first Duke of Normandy. His line through William the Conqueror became the royal house of England in 1066 and the reigning family of Norway in 1905. This statue was dedicated at the intersection of 5th Avenue



North and Broadway in 1912 and is one of several in the Red River Valley erected through the efforts of H. O. Fjelde, a Fargo physician. In later years, it was moved from its original location and now stands near the Sons of Norway Lodge.

The statue was more than twice the size of any other in Fargo at the time. It is cast in bronze and weighs nearly 3,000 pounds.

The inscription on the plaque is in English, French, and Norwegian and reads “For World Peace Normans United.”

The unveiling of the statue was accompanied by great ceremony. A parade was held and as many as 10,000 people of Norwegian and French descent visited Fargo for the occasion.

# Credits

This booklet was inspired by and borrows much from an earlier “Look Around Downtown” brochure that was published in 1985 by the Fargo Moorhead Heritage Society. Because the downtown area has undergone many changes over the past twenty years, the Fargo Historic Preservation Commission decided to undertake the creation of a new publication that would reflect the current state of the downtown area. In 2005, the Commission was awarded a grant from the State Historical Society of North Dakota to develop and publish this booklet.

In the spring of 2006, 1,500 copies of this booklet were printed. Those copies were distributed in less than a week due to high demand. The Fargo Moorhead Heritage Society generously helped to fund this reprinting of 10,000 copies in spring 2007.

The Fargo Moorhead Heritage Society also funded the purchase of the building placards that identify buildings on the walking tours.

This brochure was developed by Claire Strom, Christine Kloubec, and Dawn Mayo, with the assistance of Paul Gleye, David Shultz, and Daryl Bachmeier for some of the architectural descriptions. Layout and editing services were provided by Heather Mitzel. Photos of existing buildings were taken by Bill Kloubec of Heliostudio.

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